HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

THE HERMITAGE, ALFRED'S CABIN

HABS No. TN-52-C

Location: As part of The Hermitage historic site, Alfred's Cabin is in Hermitage, Davidson County, Tennessee. Alfred's Cabin is behind The Hermitage Mansion and nearby the formal garden.

The street address for The Hermitage is 4580 Rachel's Lane, Hermitage, Tennessee.

The Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Coordinates for Alfred's Cabin are: 16/534820/4007720.[1]

Present Owner/ Occupant: The Ladies' Hermitage Association, a not-for-profit organization, has owned and operated The Hermitage as an historic site since 1889.

Present Use: Because General Andrew Jackson's former slave Alfred lived in the cabin between 1889 and 1901, The Hermitage tells Alfred's story here.

Significance: Alfred's Cabin is an important part of General Andrew Jackson's plantation, The Hermitage, because it is the only remaining dwelling on the property that can be directly linked to its slaves.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date: ca. 1840. Archaeological evidence dates the construction of Alfred's Cabin in its present location to the 1840s.[2]

2. Architect, builder, contractor, suppliers: It is unknown at this time who built Alfred's Cabin. However, it was likely erected by the slaves themselves under the supervision of Andrew Jackson, Andrew Jackson, Jr., or an overseer employed by the Jackson family. Likewise, the materials are probably indigenous to the property.[3]

3. Original and subsequent owners & occupants: The chain of title for Alfred's Cabin follows that of General Andrew Jackson and his heirs to the State of Tennessee and then ultimately to the Ladies'

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[1]UTM coordinates taken from the USGS 7.5' series, Hermitage, Tennessee quadrangle, with a scale of 1:24,000.

[2]Larry McKee, "Summary Report on the 1994 Excavation around 'Alfred's Cabin' at The Hermitage," Report, December 1997, Department of Archaeology, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; see also, Ladies' Hermitage Association Photographs (P030, P0238, P0274, P0290, P0565, P0567, P0568, and P0628.4), var. dates, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[3]Please see the report for the West Cabin (HABS No. TN-52-A).

Hermitage Association in 1889.[4] It is not known who occupied Alfred's Cabin before the Lades' Hermitage Association took over the property. From 1889 until his death in 1901, Alfred lived in the cabin. No one else lived in the cabin after his death.

4. Original plans and construction: There are no known plans for Alfred's Cabin. The scale of the cabin fits that of other slave-related structures on the grounds of The Hermitage. It is a duplex (about 40' x 20') built of wood.[5] The two rooms of Alfred's Cabin were separated by a log wall, or partition, running through the center of the building. The rooms were not connected by a door. The loft above the single rooms was divided into two distinct spaces as well.

5. Alterations and additions:

1840-1860

Soon after its placement in the house yard in the 1840s, the area around the structure that became known as Alfred's Cabin was fenced.[6] Other antebellum architectural decisions regarding (Alfred's) cabin are unknown at this time. Moreover, traditions surrounding the origin of Alfred's Cabin do not offer any further insight. Instead, it is suggested that the cabin was moved to its location from another place on the grounds around 1850.

1860-1889

It is not known who lived in Alfred's Cabin during this interval nor is it known what happened to the building architecturally.[7]

Ladies' Hermitage Association, 1889-present

In 1889 the Ladies' Hermitage Association (LHA) became stewards of the former Jackson property; the land included the Hermitage Mansion, garden and tomb, the yard north of the mansion, and the First Hermitage. The minutes of the LHA board meetings record discussions about maintaining Alfred's Cabin. In 1895, the LHA decided to replace the chimney piece in the cabin. In the next two

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[4]Please see the chain of title information in HABS No. TN-52 and/or HABS No. TN-52-A, and in the National Historic Landmark (NHL) file for General Andrew Jackson's plantation, The Hermitage. The Hermitage became a NHL because of Andrew Jackson's political and military career. Jackson was the hero of the Battle of New Orleans in January 1815 and went on to become the seventh President of the United States in 1828.

[5]For the precise measurements, taken to the eighth of an inch, please see the fieldnotes for HABS No. TN-52-C.

[6]McKee, "Summary Report on the 1994 Excavation of 'Alfred's Cabin' at The Hermitage."

[7]Although it is not known where on The Hermitage property he lived prior to the Ladies' Hermitage Association stewardship, the 1880 agricultural census recorded Alfred Jackson as renting a farm for a share of its products. He had 24 improved acres, $20.00 worth of farm implements, $100.00 worth of livestock, an estimated $200.00 worth of farm productions sold, consumed or on-hand in 1879, two horses, eight swine, fifteen poultry, forty-eight eggs produced in 1879, 20 acres of Indian corn that yielded 600 bushels, 4 acres of cotton that yielded one bale, 20 cords wood cut, and $30.00 worth of forest products sold or consumed. See Record Group 29, Bureau of the Census, Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880, Agriculture 1880, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (Microfilm T-1135, roll #19).

years, the LHA authorized some unidentified repairs as well as put in a ceiling and a floor.[8]

Between 1927 and 1928, the LHA recommended repairing the cabin.[9] Although the minutes did not specify which room was which, the logs in one of the rooms, referred to as the "second" room, were scraped and stained to resemble a smokey effect.[10] By the end of the 1950s, Alfred's Cabin needed interior paint.[11]

Changes to Alfred's Cabin were not mentioned specifically in the project proposal of the Works Projects Administration work at The Hermitage during the 1930s. Three men who worked on the property were photographed as they stood in front of the cabin; these men were descendants of Alfred.[12]

In 1978 the LHA board again commented that the cabin required maintenance. Some discussion of the restoration occupied the LHA until 1981. At this time, certain measures were recommended such as raising the cabin eight inches and re-grading the pathways to correct drainage and subsequent rotting wood problems, removing the interior stone facing of the fireplace, replacing the floor, re-chinking between the logs, and applying another coat of whitewash.[13]

In 1991-92, Victor Hood conducted a restoration survey of The Hermitage property; his task was to recommend repairs needed for maintaining the historic structures. In Alfred's Cabin, Hood found that the sill logs were sagging under the pressure of the floor system. To compensate for this, piers and footers were added to the foundation at the central points to help support the flooring.[14] In 1987, the roof received new shingles.[15] After the April 1998 tornado, Alfred's Cabin needed a new roof.[16]

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[8]Minutes, December 1895, September 1896, August 1897, and December 1897, Ladies' Hermitage Association, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[9]Ladies' Hermitage Association Research file #169, Department of Preservation, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[10]Minutes, June 1927, September 1927, March 1928, and April 1928, Ladies' Hermitage Association, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[11]Minutes, July 1958, Ladies' Hermitage Association, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[12]Record Group 69, Works Projects Administration, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

[13]Minutes, October 1974, Ladies' Hermitage Association, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; Minutes, August 1978, Ladies' Hermitage Association, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; Minutes, August 1981, September 1981, October 1981, and November 1981, Ladies' Hermitage Association, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; and Site visit and inspection, Henry A. Judd, November 1981. On this tour of the grounds with the Board Members of the Ladies' Hermitage Association, Judd approved of the posts placed under the sills, among other maintenance endeavors.

[14]Victor P. Hood, Property Inspection, 1991-92, Department of Preservation, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[15]Minutes, July 1987, Ladies' Hermitage Association, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; Site visit, April 1999.

[16]Site visit, April 1999.

A. Historical Context: Cotton Currency

In 1686 a visitor to British colonial America observed,

> There is little money in circulation, except among the people of quality. They do business with their tobacco as if it were money. With tobacco they buy lands, hire and buy cattle; and [. . .] they can secure all they want with this commodity [ . . . ][17]

Although describing seventeenth-century Tidewater, the traveler's assessment could be extended readily to the early nineteenth-century backcountry and its agricultural commodity, cotton. In Tennessee, as elsewhere throughout the South, the regional cash crop made its cultivators money. It also acted as specie for their business transactions. Actual currency, such as silver or gold, was rare in the colonial Chesapeake and remained scarce so that residents of the newly opened lands west of the Appalachian Mountains faced the similar circumstances. Neither tobacco nor cotton was traded on a barter system; instead farmers and merchants relied on the promise of the upcoming harvest as a credit against which charges for consumer goods and sundry items were applied. The next season's output, then, was literally legal tender. In anticipation of profits, many southern farmers and planters drew on the hoped for but as yet unrealized returns. Andrew Jackson, for example, committed a balance, payable in cotton and deliverable over three months, for goods he would then re-sell in Tennessee. His dealer, however, requested some cash up front. The next year, Jackson bought cotton from others to use as money for more consumer goods to stock his store.[18]

The cash crop of the antebellum South was cotton. Cotton bales were as good as coins. Goods, lands, and slaves were purchased with them. Merchants' accounts, for example, record payments in cotton bales as do letters to and from creditors seeking to distribute profits. Jackson's business deals, particularly in his stores, illustrate this point. He bought and accepted others' cotton as payment and then used it to purchase material goods, which he would then sell to those living around Nashville.[19]

When the market was strong, borrowing against the future yield risked only a farmer's luck and agricultural savvy. In a depressed economy, or a scenario wherein supply exceeds demand, circumstances of the credit system seemingly conspired to keep the producer in debt.[20] In 1803, for

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[17][Durand de Dauphine], A Frenchman in Virginia being the Memoirs of a Huguenot Refugee in 1686, trans. by a Virginian (Richmond, VA: privately printed, 1923), p. 99-100.

[18]See George Michael Deadrick to Andrew Jackson, Nashville, Letter, 21 January 1802, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Microfilm, reel #2, 1797-1803); Thomas Watson, Davidson County, to Andrew Jackson, Letter, 27 March 1803, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Microfilm, reel #71, 1779-1818); and The Papers of Andrew Jackson, vol. 1, 1770-1803, ed. Sam B. Smith and Harriet Chappell Owsley (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1980; 2nd printing, 1987), p. 273, 327-328.

[19]See, for example, Thomas Watson Davidson County, to Andrew Jackson, Letter, 27 March 1803, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Microfilm, reel #71, 1779-1818) and The Papers of Andrew Jackson, vol. 1, p. 327-328.

[20]T.H. Breen, Tobacco Colony (/) The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985). In this book, Breen argues that circumstances of debt -- created by this reliance on a future pay off that often did not pan out as well as hoped -- owed to English agents and Scottish factors in increasing amounts after 1750 contributed in no small part to the desire for independence pursued by the colonial Americans in the 1770s.

example, the cotton market in England suffered because of the commercial war in Europe -- the Napoleon effect -- and several factors failed. The collapse of George Barclay & Company of London, for example, caused Andrew Jackson's mercantile associates in Philadelphia to express the hope that their friends in Liverpool would be safe. They advised Jackson not to count on fetching high prices for his cotton, and certainly to expect no more than ten to twelve cents per pound, a significant drop from the twenty-six to twenty-eight received earlier.[21]

Compounding this credit-for-crop economic cycle, men offered their "notes" as payment. Essentially, the note represented a man's word, his honor pledged in exchange for what was owed. These notes were sort of an "IOU" accepted in lieu of hard currency and a harvested crop in anticipation of a cash influx before they became due. When signed, they were legally binding. This form of paper money often got the endorser in trouble because, regardless of subsequent fiscal circumstances, he had to deliver. The notes were met even when crops failed, when the hogsheads or bales were ruined during transport, when land speculation deals collapsed, and when attempts to sell property fell on deaf ears.

This is what happened to Andrew Jackson after he accepted notes from an acquaintance, David Allison, for land Jackson wanted to sell. Jackson used the notes (after endorsing them) as payment to his own creditors. Allison ended up in a debtor's prison in Philadelphia and Jackson was at risk for a similar fate. Jackson, however, sold most everything he had to meet his obligations including his home plantation, Hunter's Hill. It was then that he bought the property that became The Hermitage.[22]

## Cotton & Settlement

The universality of cotton production on large and small farming operations was a nineteenth-century phenomenon. Earlier, planters tried to raise cotton with little success. In 1786-87, for example, planters on the Georgia coast produced a strain with green seeds that flourished. Despite its promise, the difficulty in removing the lint from the seeds prevented it from replacing tobacco as the region's agricultural stalwart at that time. Cotton, then, was not a determining factor in the agricultural decisions and land allocation, even for the affluent, until the advent of the ginning machine in the 1790s.[23]

In 1793, Eli Whitney invented a machine that separated the lint and seeds; other designers almost simultaneously followed suit. The technology, traditionally credited to Whitney, enabled small farmers to compete with large-scale plantations. Each benefitted from the intrinsic qualities of cotton chiefly its relative lightness, sanctity from bugs, and unlikelihood of spoilage in comparison to tobacco and the

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[21]Samuel Meeker, Philadelphia, to Andrew Jackson, Letter, 10 October 1803, in The Papers of Andrew Jackson, vol. 1, p. 378; William Charles Cole Claiborne, Natchez, to Andrew Jackson, 20 January 1802, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Microfilm, reel #2, 1797-1803); see also The Papers of Andrew Jackson, vol. 1, p. 272.

[22]Robert V. Remini, Andrew Jackson, vol. 1 The Course of American Empire 1767-1821 (New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1977; paperback edition, Baltimore, MD and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 86-90, 129-132; Andrew Jackson to Edward Ward, Deed, 6 July 1804, rec. 17 August 1804, Davidson County, Deed Book F, p. 188; Nathaniel Hays to Andrew Jackson, Deed, 23 August 1804, rec. 30 March 1805, Davidson County, Deed Book F, p. 241.

[23]See note below.

hazards inherent in readying and shipping the weed to market.[24] As a large-scale operator, Andrew Jackson had a cotton gin by March 1801; he, moreover, ginned for his neighbors who worked smaller farms and within tighter budgets and so could not have their own gin. Not being able to possess a cotton gin did not exclude them from the benefits of cotton production as illustrated the receipt Jackson issued to a neighbor in 1801. Expanding his cotton interests, Jackson contracted Jesse Dawson to build a cotton gin for him. This was in February 1802, and coincided with Jackson's agreement with Thomas Watson and John Hutchings regarding the establishment of stores in Wilson and Davidson Counties. On Watson's property, Jackson and Watson had a store, cotton gin and distillery; in Wilson County, Jackson and Hutchings had a store, gin, and press. The traders bought goods in Philadelphia and Baltimore to furnish the stores, and expected to pay (probably in cotton received from their customers) in the following December, January, and February.[25] Sometimes, in spite of packing the cotton in the desirable square bales and a reportedly good price, cotton traders experienced setbacks. In transport, part of Jackson's cotton was ruined -- not by bugs or spoiling or packaging as tobacco was prone to do -- because one boat was damaged. His contact in New Orleans, however, re-bundled the cotton and saved all but one bale.[26]

Although associated with Whitney's design for the cotton gin, westward expansion began almost concurrently to the English crown's declaration that the Appalachian Mountains were the (arbitrary) boundary of British colonial America in 1763. This was done in an effort to keep white and Native Americans apart once England vanquished France from the new world east of the Mississippi. Nevertheless white Americans crossed the Appalachians, and to the dismay of Native Americans, stayed

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[24]Eli Whitney invented the design for a saw gin in 1793; because others developed similar machines before his patent, Whitney never realized the profits his design afforded others. It is generally accepted that the cotton gin made Cotton 'King" in the South and that it spurred the great westward movement from the East Coast to Texas. In so doing, it also wears the taint of the underhanded treatment of the Native Americans who happened to be in the way of the cotton planters. See Carroll van West, ed., The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, (Nashville, TN: Rutledge Hill Press for the Tennessee Historical Society, 1998), s.v., "Cotton," by Wayne C. Moore; John B. Boles, The South through Time, vol. 1 A History of an American Region (paperback ed., Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), p. 73-78, 150-153; and John Michael Vlach, "Plantation Landscapes of the Antebellum South," in Before Freedom Came (/) African-American Life in the Antebellum South, ed. Edward D.C. Campbell, Jr., with Kym S. Rice (Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia for the Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, VA, 1991), p. 33-34.

In 1802, a "Cotton Gin Committee" met in Nashville to determine compensation for the patentees on the gin and if the most economical way to do so was for the state to purchase the rights from the patentees (Whitney was one). The legislature decided to buy the rights to patent, and then to tax those in the state who made and used a gin. The tax was for thirty-seven and half cents per saw for four years. Because the committee considered the cultivation of cotton an object of great importance to Tennessee, and an article that in all probability the riches of the country will depend, the committee members urged the legislature to act. They strongly believed that citizens of the state should be able to participate in the cotton trade without risk of penalties and with the benefit of the latest technology. See Resolutions of Cotton Gin Committee, 13 July 1802, in The Papers of Andrew Jackson, vol. 1, p. 303-304.

[25]Receipt for Cotton, 26 March 1801, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Microfilm, reel #2, 1797-1803); Jesse Dawson to Andrew Jackson, Letter, 15 February 1802, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Microfilm, reel #2, 1797-1803); Andrew Jackson and Thomas Watson and John Hutchings, Agreement, 16 February 1802, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Microfilm, reel #2, 1797-1803); and The Papers of Andrew Jackson, vol. 1, p. 242, 278-280.

[26]Nathan Davidson, New Orleans, to Andrew Jackson, Letter, 3 June 1803, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Microfilm, reel #2, 1797-1803); Boggs and Davidson to Andrew Jackson, Letter, 2 August 1803, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Microfilm, reel #3, 1803-1806); and The Papers of Andrew Jackson, vol. 1, p. 332, 350.

in the territories affiliated with the initial thirteen states. They settled in the Ohio Territory, in Kentucky, in western Virginia, and in western North Carolina. The latter, sometimes referred to as the "old" southwest, gained territory status in 1793 and statehood in 1796 under the name of Tennessee.[27]

Prior to Tennessee's recognition as a state, frontiersmen James Robertson and John Donelson (who was the father of Andrew Jackson's wife Rachel) reached a salt lick in the Cumberland Valley. They settled there in 1779-80, and named the locality Nashville. The white establishment of Nashville, however, encroached on Native Americans' ground. It had long been a hub of their activities relating to the fur trade and to obtain salt. In spite of opposition by Native Americans, enough white people lived there for the North Carolina legislature to create a county -- as an instrument necessary for representative government -- in 1783. The legislature named the entity for William L. Davidson, a Revolutionary War hero. Nashville became the county seat.[28]

Many of the Native Americas were hostile to the white settlers and that feeling was reciprocated. Jackson, in particular, acted on those sentiments in his political and military duties because he perceived the Indian tribes as a menace. His escapades included contributions to the treaty with the Cherokees that led to the cessation of the western lands in present-day Tennessee. They also included actions taken while he was Governor of Florida, taken on behalf of the United States during the War of 1812, particularly against the Creek Indians, and ultimately, as President. During his tenure in the White House, Jackson signed into law the Indian Removal Act in 1830. The Cherokees passed through Nashville in 1838 on their way to the western reserves; their route became known as the "Trail of Tears" and was a direct result of the law. By 1838, though, the white men mitigated the threat of Native Americans in the east and turned their attention to the land opened to them.[29]

Perhaps the settlers of European descent always thought of the frontier as virgin land, available for the taking. Native Americans did not fence fields, build towns, and farm the soil as white Americans did, and significantly, understood. The difference in cultural perception contributed to the white men's occupation of lands that they interpreted as uninhabited, at least not permanently, but endangered by roving Indian tribes. Cultivated land exhibited ownership, the white man's civilizing mark, for others to see and acknowledge. By operating outside this milieu, the Native Americans were at a disadvantage in early America. The visual effect created an inferior position of ownership for the Native Americans and justified the white Americans' grabbing of what they assumed was unused, wasted land waiting to be claimed, cleared, and planted.[30] Ironically, even those Native Americans who tried to assimilate were

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[27]For a summary of the political maneuvers required for Tennessee's statehood, see Remini, Andrew Jackson, vol. 1, p. 70-85, passim.

[28]Van West, ed., The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, s.v., "Davidson County," by Carroll van West.

[29]Van West, ed., The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, s.v., "Davidson County," by Carroll van West, s.v., "Cotton," by Wayne C. Moore, s.v., "Trail of Tears," by Ben Harris McClary, and s.v., "Transylvania Purchase," by Michael Toomey. See Remini, vol. 1, generally, for a synopsis of Jackson's dealing with the Native Americans. In particular, Remini discusses Jackson's role in the negotiation of treaties with the Cherokees, Creeks, Chickasaws, and Choctaws in 1815-16, beginning on p. 300.

[30]Bernard L. Herman, The Stolen House (Charlottesville, VA and London: The University Press of Virginia, 1992). Herman suggested that uncultivated land exhibited no authority to others and so projected ambiguous ownership. Herman's argument about the perception of the open landscape, that was cleared and planted and clearly suggestive of someone's

ousted unceremoniously with those who held tightly to traditional ways. Many of the Cherokee Indians in Georgia, for example, adopted agricultural, political, and legal methods of the whites and lost their land in spite of their efforts to participate in the federal and state system. By the 1850s, those Native Americans farming east of the Mississippi had only the poorest soil on which to subsist. Frederick Law Olmsted commented that of

> the number of small Indian farms [he saw],[they were] very badly cultivated — the corn nearly concealed by weeds. The soil became poorer than before, and the cabins of poor people more frequent.[31]

Having disposed of the Native American presence, and incipient danger they represented, antebellum farmers adopted the technology offered them by Whitney and turned Tennessee into the fifth largest cotton producer by 1850. Memphis was the largest inland cotton center; the city also had become a nexus of slave trading, merchants, and cotton factors in the upper Mississippi Delta. This prosperity was the cumulative effect of thirty years or so of exploiting the rich soil between the Tennessee and Mississippi Rivers; it was here, in the western reaches of the state, that many in the eastern counties looked to move to start anew and to make the money their father's had. Andrew Jackson, Jr., for example, began buying property on the Mississippi in the 1840s and planned to relocate there as his fortunes crumbled in Nashville in the 1850s. Likewise, part of the Donelson clan departed Davidson County for Memphis because no more money could be made there.[32]

Dependency on cotton created a unified economy and cohesive outlook from the Carolinas to Texas. While regionally binding, cotton did not foster introspection or isolation from northern markets and international trade. Cotton linked the South to metropolitan centers throughout the United States, such as Philadelphia and New Orleans, as well as abroad, in places like London and Liverpool. Andrew Jackson, for example, first tested the market in New Orleans and then in search of a better price, shipped his bales to Liverpool.[33] Backcountry inhabitants maintained cultural ties, and forged new economic alliances, with the eastern states and so were not geographically and culturally cloistered. Cotton also

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proprietorship, versus a closed setting (left the nature's devices and so no evidence of human presence -- or of the built environment) explains how a guardian could "steal" his wards property. Their father only planted a small percentage of the acreage he possessed; out of this closed landscape, the guardian took the dwelling (literally removed it) and placed it on his land.

[31]Frederick Law Olmsted, The Cotton Kingdom, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger, with an introduction by Lawrence M. Powell (paperback, Modern College Library Edition, New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1984), p. 376. Olmsted was in the interior cotton district at the time, specifically in Mississippi when he saw the Indian farms.

[32]Andrew Jackson, Jr., to Sarah Jackson, Letter, 16 May 1856, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; Sarah Jackson to Andrew Jackson, III, Letter, 7 September 1856, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; Sarah Jackson to Andrew Jackson, III, Letter, 16 January 1856, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[33]Andrew Jackson, Nashville, to Nathan Davidson, Letter, 18 April 1803, Andrew Jackson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Microfilm, reel #3, 1803-1806); see also, The Papers of Andrew Jackson, vol. 1, p. 329.

The slave system, briefly, depended on traders who seized Africans from their homeland. The slave traders brought the Africans to the new world beginning in 1619, and once there, sold them into service for a term that increasingly became for life.

locked the South into the slave system because of the pressing need for agricultural laborers and to keep production costs low. Since the early 1800s, the slave population was reproducing itself. This enabled the slave owners to perpetuate the institution of bound-labor without the expense of importing new people from Africa directly or by buying them from a sugar plantation in the West Indies. Children of the Negroes, so called for the color of their skin as well as to accentuate the difference in appearance from whites, adopted the status of their mother. This made women both producers and reproducers for their masters. It did not, however, keep them from the cotton fields where they worked alongside the men.[34]

## Cotton and Slavery

Eli Whitney sometimes is blamed in part for the "fireball in the night" that was the plantation system of slavery in the American South. Whitney's design for the cotton gin gave the South a staple crop, but agriculturists already had adopted slavery with increasing exclusivity beginning in the third quarter of the seventeenth century.[35] As a result, slaves cultivated tobacco and grain in the Chesapeake, rice in the Carolina Low Country, sugar in southern Louisiana, and cotton from South Carolina to Texas. Of these products, tobacco, sugar, and cotton shared similar work routines. Generally the plantation master organized his field hands into "gangs" that toiled under the supervision of an overseer or a driver. In the cotton fields, slaves' daily regimen included hoeing the soil (about a half-acre a day) or picking the tufts (about ninety pounds a day) by hand. They also packed the cotton down with their feet. During the harvest, an adult field hand was pushed to collect five bales of cotton a day (at a bale an acre) but the amount planted usually exceeded what a slave could do; masters hoped to muster superhuman efforts from their slaves as the seeds ripened. They did so with varying degrees of success.[36]

The slave culture of tobacco was exported from the Chesapeake to the backcountry where it was adopted for cotton. It too was seasonal, requiring intensive care throughout all phases of cultivation. Like tobacco, cotton agriculture was driven by the economy. Slaves offered the planters a relatively cheap, stable, and portable labor force. The latter quality was particularly important because, as tobacco did, cotton depleted the soil of its nutrients and so the fields had a limited life-span. This generated an urgency in land acquisition felt by many coming into the backcountry around the end of the eighteenth century. For the slaves, though, being movable held the threat of separation from families and friends

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[34]Boles, p. 66-78; Charles Joyner, "The World of the Plantation Slaves," in Before Freedom Came (/) African-American Life in the Antebellum South, ed. Edward D.C. Campbell, Jr., with Kym S. Rice (Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia for the Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, VA, 1991), p. 51-52 ; see also, Hazel V. Carby, Reconstructing Womanhood (paperback ed., New York, NY and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 20-120, regarding black feminist cultural history and sexual ideologies at work in the nineteenth century.

[35]See Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom (/) the Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (paperback ed., New York, NY and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1975), for an account of the simultaneous development of slavery in Virginia after Bacon's Rebellion in 1676-77 and the virtual demise of indentured servitude by 1700, and independence for the colonies crafted and led by Virginia's leading statesmen, all slave-holders.

[36]Vlach, "Plantation Landscapes of the Antebellum South," p. 34-36; Joyner, "The World of the Plantation Slaves," p. 52; Boles, p. 66-78, 200-16; Philip D. Morgan, "Work and Culture: the Task System and the World of Lowcountry Blacks, 1700-1880," in Material Life in America, 1600-1860, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1988), p. 203-232, passim; Personal Communication, Maurie D. McInnis, April 1999.

Upon entering the interior cotton district, Olmsted learned and then repeated his first host's boast that the land yielded a bale of cotton per acre in the good days; this was May 1854. See Olmsted, p. 360.

within the slave community either through sale or a partial relocation of a planter's work force. In 1866, for example, Gracy, who was the personal "servant" of Sarah Jackson (the wife of Andrew Jackson, Jr.), had to ask for news of her son Augustus. Gracy remained at The Hermitage with her mistress, but her son had gone with Andrew Jackson, III, while he assessed what was left of the family's Mississippi River holdings after the war.[37]

The slaves of southern cotton plantations performed menial agricultural tasks, often without the benefit of up-to-date tools or technology, and for their efforts, they received varying degrees of treatment that at the worst was inhumane and at best, paternalistic. Their material life was not so different from that of the poor whites, however, the slaves never had the opportunity to control their destiny.[38] For example, in 1861 Samuel Jackson attempted to gain possession of a plantation in Louisiana that his father, Andrew Jackson, Jr., bought. Samuel Jackson experienced difficulty because the previous owner had not moved his slaves off the premises; Jackson occupied the overseer's house but the Jackson family's slaves had no shelter. The only distinction made between the poor white dwelling, which was the overseer's house, and

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[37]Sarah Jackson to Andrew Jackson, III, Letter, 16 January 1857, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; Sarah Jackson to Andrew Jackson, III, Letter, 3 September 1860, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; Samuel Jackson to Sarah Jackson, Letter, 16 August 1857, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; Sarah Jackson to Andrew Jackson, III, Letter, July 1866, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

When Andrew Jackson, Jr., attempted to sell his iron works the buyers requested that the Negroes be part of the deal. Over Jackson's protests, thirty-seven of his slaves were included. The buyers objected, after the initial deal, to Jackson's assessment of the ages of several of the slaves, particularly Isaac, John, Campbell, Jacob, and Amy (?). They said that the Negroes were older than Jackson indicated. See Jackson's Statement, 1857, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

The iron works debacle was not the first time the slaves of the Hermitage faced sale and separation from one another. In May 1855, the Hermitage (1000 acres) and the slaves there were scheduled for sale at public auction to meet debts accrued by Andrew Jackson, Jr. Luckily, for Jackson and his slaves, his son-in-law stepped in and assumed responsibility for the notes owed to George A. Washington in a bond dated 1855. From this arrangement we know that the slaves at the Hermitage were Squire, Smith, Polidore, Charles, Alfred, Ben, Bryon, Henry, Ned Davis, Minor, Aaron, Tom, George, Dick, Augustus, William, Sampson, Thornton, Simon, John, Albert, Moses, Booker, Julius, Davy, Little Tom, Sam, Dadey, Maria, Louisa, Grace, Cornelia, Sarah, Nan, Charlotte, Gracey, Manthis, B. Sally, D. Sally, C. Sally, Prissy, Laura, Kitty, Jane, Maria, Cresey, Eady, Betsey, Betty, Martha, Julia, L. Hannah, Ind'n Hannah, L. Gracey, M. Ellen, Rindy, Letty, Mary Ann, Molly, and Sylva. See Notice, 12 May 1855, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[38]Boles, p. 66-78.

In pockets of the South where the soil was inferior in quality, or depleted by a previous owner's husbandry, poor people struggled to grow cotton, corn, and oats. Few plantations, defined by Olmsted as "Negro-cultivated farms" existed; those that had Negroes only managed between ten and twenty. Here, he judged, the Negroes had more freedom than in the rich cotton country. Perhaps because little to no material things separated their plight from that of their white neighbors.

Olmsted complained that he passed by many (at least twenty) cabins of the commonest sort in a day. One had a wagon and a horse outside, indicative of some prosperity, as well as an open door so Olmsted approached the building hoping to glimpse inside at an ordinary person's material life. The proprietor welcomed Olmsted although he was "not in the habit of taking in travelers." Olmsted described the cabin's dimensions as comprising a single room open all the way to the roof and encompassing twenty-eight by twenty-five feet. The building had no windows, only a door to each side and a fireplace at one end, making a cabin akin to one half of the East Cabin duplex. Ornamental and practical furnishings included two bedsteds, a spinning wheel, a packing case, two or three deer skin seated chairs, a Connecticut clock, a poster of Jayne's patent medicines, and a table. Of his vocation, Olmsted's host commented that he had to work like a Negro and despite his efforts, weeds choked out his cotton. Generally, as a one-man operation, he planted between twenty to thirty acres of cotton and corn.

Olmsted went on to say that these poorer sort in the interior cotton district were a "friendly ignorant people." These farmers dealt with an agriculture that was wretched and work that was hard. Although he saw white women hoeing in the fields, Olmsted commented that he heard a spinning wheel in every house. See Olmsted, p. 376, 391-392, 477-479.

the slave quarters came down to who was in them and who decided where the others were to go. It was an intangible difference of the freedom to choose, but one that was signified by the material culture available on the newly acquired plantation.[39]

Similar material conditions were present in the hills of northern Alabama as well as in parts of Tennessee in the 1850s. Frederick Law Olmsted saw many "rude log huts for dwellings" that were only one room inside. These measured roughly fifteen feet square and so were "unwholesomely" crowded by the number of people who lived inside of them. It was at these cabins that Olmsted was "loathe to ask for lodging."[40] In another setting within the cotton district, Olmsted encountered a neat house surrounded by a cluster of old cabins, that served as kitchen, smokehouse, and slave quarters. Of the latter, Olmsted wrote that

> The Negro cabins were small, dilapidated, and dingy; the walls were not chinked, and there were no windows — which, indeed, would have been a superfluous luxury, for there were spaces of several inches between the logs, through there was unobstructed vision. The furniture in the cabins was of the simplest and rudest imaginable kind, [ . . . ] Everything within the cabins was coloured black by smoke. The chimneys of [ . . . ] the cabins were built of splinters and clay, and on the outer side of the walls. [ . . . ] Within each of them was a woman or two, spinning with the old fashioned great wheel, and in the kitchen another woman was weaving coarse cotton shirting with the ancient rude hand loom.

Around these cabins were a pigsty and poultry coup as well as home-carded cotton set on boards and placed in the sun to bleach.[41] Such surroundings completed the landscape of the South, when they are considered alongside the large plantation operations such as that run for Andrew Jackson at The Hermitage. Although less common than the "monotony of huts" recorded by Olmsted, the extensive farmsteads with mansions and neatly arranged quarters predominate twentieth-century perceptions of the antebellum era countryside.

In contrast to the gangs sent to the tobacco, sugar, and cotton fields, slaves living the Lowcountry participated in a task-labor system. The task system differed from cotton culture in that the workday of slaves was measured by output rather than by sun up to sun down. Once a slave's task was complete, the remainder of the day was his or hers to enjoy. With free time, slaves worked for themselves, earning money to buy goods and horses, and engaged in recreation. The incentive offered by predominantly absentee owners was the chance for slaves to make decisions about how they allocated their time. The pay off for the plantation master was that a significant proportion of slaves lived essentially unguarded by a white presence and that the threat of retaliation against their condition and white masters was small. Instead, the bound-labor force developed a creole culture and maintained African traditions that slaves

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[39]Samuel Jackson to Sarah Jackson, Letter, 1861, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[40]Olmsted, p. 381; see also, p. 376, 391-3.

[41]Olmsted, p. 346.

forced to operate in the gangs, under constant white supervision, could not do.[42]

By the early nineteenth-century, the majority of slaves lived in groups, generally in family units as they did at The Hermitage. They occupied log cabins, about sixteen feet square overall, and each was heated by a chimney.[43] These dwellings typically were organized into streets.[44] A visitor to The Hermitage in 1828 recalled that the Negro cottages ranged in a long row along the west side of a road that ran northward from the mansion. Each cottage was built like the others: of materials found on the estate, all white washed, and all accompanied by a garden. At the north end, spinners and weavers lived. These cottages, occupied by those in the sewing industry, probably were located close to the spring and the horse-powered cotton gin. These features also were placed by the visitor to the north of the house.[45] Although not extant at The Hermitage, the street-like arrangement of slave quarters was common; in Mississippi, in fact, the Jackson's plantation had a row of quarters.[46]

At The Hermitage, known slave housing included a cluster of log cabins (the East and West Cabins) and brick buildings (the South Cabin) used together as a slave quarter on the site of the First Hermitage as well as a group of brick duplexes forming the field quarter; a three-unit structure, dubbed the Triplex, also made of bricks; Alfred's Cabin; and a yard cabin in close proximity to the house. This

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[42]Morgan, "Work and Culture: the Task System and the World of Lowcountry Blacks, 1700-1880," p. 203-232, passim; Personal Communication, Fraser D. Neiman, November 1998; Personal Communication, Maurie D. McInnis, April 1999; John Michael Vlach, Afro-American Tradition in the Decorative Arts (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), generally.

[43]In the mid-eighteenth century, a sixteen by sixteen feet square dwelling was a standard for poor whites, however, no standard existed (yet) for slaves. Some built structures with thatch roofs and clay walls (South Carolina), some lived in service buildings, lofts, and cellars, or communally in a large dormitory-like arrangement. By the nineteenth century, slave families received small, single units of twelve to fourteen feet square as living quarters. These were often attached to another unit, creating a duplex arrangement, each with its own chimney stack, dirt floors, and single opening. This gave the slave family more autonomy and enabled easy surveillance through the one opening to track comings & goings, if interested.

Besides the fear of retaliation/surveillance issue, this shift to better made dwellings for the slave population can be accounted for by the desires of the plantation owner to reinforce the slaves' lower social position than that held by himself or by his overseer; to provide economical and health conscious housing (perhaps more of an advertisement to other planters); to demonstrate concern over the well-being of chattel; to control behavior through architectural conventions; and to allow the slaves a place for their family thereby fostering stability. Slaves often were kept from running away for fear of what would happen to their families. At the Hermitage, slaves with families left only after the abolitionists came to Nashville in the wake of Union forces. See Leland Ferguson, Uncommon Ground (/) Archaeology and Early African America, 1650-1800 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1992); Larry McKee, "The Ideals and Realities Behind the Design and Use of Nineteenth-Century Virginia Slave Cabins," in The Art and Mystery of Historical Archaeology (/) Essays in Honor of James Deetz, ed. A.E. Yentch and M.C. Beaudry (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 1992), p. 195-213; Personal Communication, Fraser D. Neiman, November 1998; Sarah Jackson, The Hermitage, to Andrew Jackson, III , Letter, 2 June 1863, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; Sarah Jackson to Andrew Jackson, III, Letter, 11 June 1863, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; Rachel Jackson Lawrence, Bird Song, to Samuel Jackson, Letter, 25 June 1863, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[44]Boles, p. 66-78.

[45]William R. Galt, "Recollections of the Hermitage in 1828," Fall 1828, transcription copy, Department of Archaeology, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[46]Samuel Jackson to Sarah Jackson, Letter, 26 March 1857, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

loose placement in the landscape, that is, not aligned symmetrically in a row, suggests that the location of slave housing corresponded to the work assignment. The demise of mono-culture (tobacco) at the end of the seventeenth century meant that harvest schedules varied and so work responsibilities necessarily fluctuated. Moreover, the seasonal changes in each group of agricultural laborers' task as well as soil exhaustion and crop rotation made surveillance of all the slaves, all the time, difficult. No longer could they all be watched at once. At The Hermitage, the Jackson slaves raised cotton, corn, and wheat in addition to fruit.[47]

In response to the changes in economic demand and plantation routine, property owners improved the living conditions of the slaves, giving them family housing and then later in the nineteenth century, larger better constructed units in which to live. These also were spread out, away from an overseer's view or that from the mansion, instead being close to the field where the occupants toiled.[48] Judging by the known slave housing on The Hermitage, it can be inferred from the architectural evidence that well-made quarters of both brick masonry and log construction and family living arrangements were costs Jackson was willing to bear.

Feeding, clothing, and housing plantation slaves made economic sense. Jackson himself observed in the 1835 that one willing laborer was worth the work of two that forced Jackson or his representative to bully them into production.[49] It is also likely that Jackson allowed his slaves to tend to gardens of their own; with their vegetables, fruit, hogs and poultry, the slaves could supplement their diet and the rations allocated to them by the plantation masters. For example, in 1857 Sarah Jackson commented that the yard was given over completely to her poultry; she had chickens, geese, ducks, and turkeys. Separate from Jackson's poultry, significantly, was a coop behind Alfred's house that probably was for his individual use.[50]

## Cotton, Slavery, and the Landscape

The architecture of slavery was in place almost before the institution took hold in the seventeenth-century. As colonists constructed their dwellings, they began to segregate the interior, social space of living, leisure, and work as soon as was possible. This happened fairly quickly as the colonists determined there was a social reward in doing so. Recognizing the advantages of reducing the scope of activities happening one place, they separated general use areas from those associated with bulk processing and storage. Traditionally, the bulk processing and storage jurisdiction was that of sweat and

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[47]Sarah Jackson to Andrew Jackson, III, Letter, 16 January 1857, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee. Similarly, in Mississippi Samuel Jackson reported that he had cotton, corn, peas, and hogs. See Samuel Jackson to Andrew Jackson, Jr., Letter, 22 July 1857, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[48]Personal Communication, Fraser D. Neiman, November 1998; Site visit, Monticello mountain field quarters, April 1999.

[49]Andrew Jackson to Andrew Jackson, Jr., Letter, 1835, Andrew Jackson papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; see also, Remini, vol. 1, p. 133-134 and vol. 3, p. 50-51.

[50]Sarah Jackson to Andrew Jackson, III, Letter, 9 & 10 May 1857, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; McKee, "Summary Report on the 1994 Excavation around 'Alfred's Cabin' at the Hermitage"; in McKee's report, see figure 11 for position of the corner dedicated to poultry in Alfred's Cabin yard.

drudgery such as food preparation, processing, and preservation, trash disposal, agricultural and livestock needs, and servant sleeping quarters.[51]

Delineating the general activities that took place in the heart of the household from those pushed to the peripheral happened architecturally. A room was added to the two-room, hall and chamber house plan of the early seventeenth century. This new living space, dedicated to service activities, was beside, below, or behind the primary living rooms. If placed beside, that is "equal" with the other two, the work room was removed spatially by a cross passage. Thus, the house proper was insulated by the cross passage from the bustle of jobs and people connected with bulk processing and storage. By the end of the century, this notion of spatial segregation altered the idea of a three-part house plan by moving the bulk processing and storage out of the dwelling altogether. Whether inside as a utilitarian domain or outside in a subsidiary structure, the service zones received a less than equal position in the house plan. The architectural discrepancy between the service space and the core of the house suggests that perceptions of those doing the serving differed from those being waited on.[52] Inequities within the human household component -- the persons associated with bulk processing and storage -- also existed for travelers noticed separate houses for black and white laborers. In 1686, for example,

> Whatever their estates, for what reason I do not know, they build their houses consisting only of two ground floor rooms [. . .] according to his means, each planter provides as many of such houses as he needs. They build also a separate kitchen, a house for the Christian slaves, another for Negro slaves, and several tobacco barns, [. . .][53]

As they did in the seventeenth century, colonists continued to build home complexes "which shew like little villages, for having kitchins, dayry houses, barns, stables, storehouses, and some of them 2 or 3 Negro quarters all Separate from Each Other [. . .]"[54] Although the custom of building a dwelling and ancillary outbuildings continued, a significant evolution had occurred. There was no distinction made between slaves, for in 1732, they were all described as Negroes.

The practice of building small, free standing structures rather than one large house persisted as settlers moved across the South; the formula lasted throughout the antebellum period. When traveling in the 1850s, for example, Olmsted noticed "neat houses" surrounded by smaller, sometimes dingy, cabins. Similarly, descriptions of the First Hermitage place several log cabins at the site, all clustered together; today there are (at least) three known cabins there. Like the smaller farmsteads, some large plantations had groups of outbuildings, rather than the symmetrical streets or rows traditionally ascribed to them. This is because many grew by accretion, with parcels added and subtracted as the fates allowed. Jackson, for example, began with 425 acres, quickly dropped to 320, and by the 1840s accumulated 1000 acres. Moreover, within the home plantation, after almost two decades of living there, Jackson built a new house of brick. Upon his exodus, the old log house (the West Cabin) became home to slaves. Thus, while

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[51]Personal Communication, Fraser D. Neiman, October 1998; Dell Upton, "The Origins of Chesapeake Architecture," in Three Centuries of Maryland Architecture (Annapolis, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 1982), p. 44-57, passim.

[52]Upton, p. 44-57, passim.

[53]Durand, p. 112-113.

[54]"Virginia in 1732," p. 27-28.

cotton was typically present on farms throughout the South, arrangements for those who worked it did not adhere to a typical format. Regardless of the presence symmetry, or lack thereof, in plantation settings the architectural ensembles of houses, slave quarters, barns, sheds, and other outbuildings were an imposing part of the landscape.[55]

Once established, the arrangement of the settled landscape into mansion houses and attendant outbuildings (in varying scales) remained largely intact. Southern planters continued to build as commodiously as possible dwellings for themselves, the metaphorical center and virtual apex of each farmstead. Radiating outward from the house, there were agricultural and service buildings, cultivated gardens, uncultivated but occupied yards, crops and orchards, improvements to the land and water, and then natural resources such as timber.[56] The Hermitage embodied this custom and was organized according to such hierarchal practices. The architecture and its setting conveyed to those moving through it a sense of progression toward something (and/or someone) significant. Their awareness was increased as they encountered barriers, such as landscape features, along the path to the house, the plantation center. At The Hermitage, visitors approached the mansion from the south, moving through a guitar shaped grove of trees; the service areas -- the lifeline of the plantation existence -- were behind the house. The built environment was understood by going through it, seeing fences, livestock, and houses that represented a planter and his position. Therefore, without ever meeting the property owners, travelers recognized their presence from their belongings on display.[57]

The everyday scenery of the rural world that was the antebellum South, such as road systems, field patterns, livestock, crops, and buildings were crafted and reshaped as fortunes changed and generations came of age to signify their progress, class, and -- they hoped -- their authority. Those agriculturalists at the apex of antebellum society concerned themselves with maintaining a productive farm (their income and status) and with controlling the countryside (their power). By ordering and organizing the land, the plantation owners showed their dominance over it and over those that worked on it.[58] This visual language worked against Andrew Jackson, Jr., as shown through the damage his inability to farm the land (as well as his father had) did to his reputation both in his lifetime and thereafter.[59]

Property owners used the settled landscape to distinguish themselves from other social groups and advertise themselves to the community at large as a desirable ally that has found success. Their

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[55]Boles, p. 66-78; Vlach, "Plantation Landscapes of the Antebellum South," p. 34-37.

[56]See Camille Wells, "The Planter's Prospect: Houses, Outbuildings, and Rural Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," Winterthur Portfolio 28, no. 1 (Spring 1993), generally and especially, the illustration of this hierarchy on p. 28.

[57]Herman, "The Model Farmer and the Organization of the Countryside," in Everyday Life in the Early Republic, ed., Catherine E. Hutchins (Winterthur, DE: The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1994), p. 52-56; Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," in Material Life in America, 1600-1860, ed., Robert Blair St. George (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1988), p. 357-369.

[58]Herman, "The Model Farmer and the Organization of the Countryside," p. 35-39.

[59]Andrew Jackson, Jr., to Sarah Jackson, 16 May 1858, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; Sarah Jackson to Andrew Jackson, Jr., 2 October 1858, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; Sarah Jackson to Andrew Jackson, III, 3 September 1860, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

neighbors, as travelers like Olmsted did, judged them at a glance. To make a favorable impression, then, these planters created an agricultural panorama with established boundaries and filled it with costly items. As containers of well-managed improvements and material goods, the plantation setting symbolized the social and economic identity of their owners. It confirmed planter's power over his household, his ability to impose his will on nature, and his skill in extracting wealth from it. Plantations, like The Hermitage in Andrew and Rachel Jackson's day, exhibited authority through the nice things it owned and by work performed on the land.[60]

After the war, the surviving members of the Jackson family evaluated their circumstances in the familiar ways, based on the possibilities of the arable land they still possessed. In 1866, Andrew Jackson, III, assessed their condition in Louisiana property by listing its agricultural produce: 300 acres in cotton, 60 acres in corn, thirty-two hands, twenty-plus plows, thirty hoes, two wagons, and one cart. The only difference, from the antebellum days, in capital after war was that Jackson had to pay the hands.[61] At home, conditions on The Hermitage were worse. Sarah Jackson sold corn to her family and neighbors to make money, as the legacy of Jackson's earlier success on the land faded from Nashville memory.[62] Sarah Jackson hoped material conditions would improve if her son returned to take charge. At The Hermitage she said,

> the old waggon [was] working in its old boxes -- the cotton tying at Alfred's house, the cows and calves growing thinner every day -- the old black hen laying her egg as often as she can -- [. . .] -- all cold and houseless & desolate for want of a master.[63]

There was no hope of regaining the Jackson's social position, even if Andrew Jackson, III, returned home to act as master. Their position dissipated as Andrew Jackson, Jr., continued to lose money and was forced into selling The Hermitage. Without property, Jackson's heirs needed another venue to define themselves socially and economically; after the collapse of the antebellum cotton kingdom in the Civil War, they were not alone.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

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[60]Wells, "The Planter's Prospect: Houses, Outbuildings, and Rural Landscapes," p. 29-31; Herman, The Stolen House, p. 136; Allan Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves (/) the Development of Southern Colonies in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800 (Chapel Hill, NC and London: The University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1986) p. 166-167.

[61]Andrew Jackson, III, to Sarah Jackson, Letter, 27 June 1866, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[62]Sarah Jackson, to Andrew Jackson, III, Letter, July 1866, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[63]Sarah Jackson, to Andrew Jackson, III, Letter, 6 December 1867, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

1. Architectural character:[64] Alfred's Cabin is an example of a saddlebag house plan, an arrangement familiar to East and Middle Tennesseans since the late eighteenth century. It was, however, the only slave dwelling of its type at The Hermitage. The other cabins associated with slave housing had double pen plans and exterior end chimneys. Despite having a central chimney, Alfred's Cabin was essentially the same size (40' x 20') as the other slave dwellings. It maintained the duplex format of two, single unconnected rooms, and followed the north to south orientation of the other slave houses on the property.

2. Condition of fabric: Generally, Alfred's Cabin shows signs of wear. The logs are weathered, some with termite damage, and the chinking cracked in places. The hardware on the doors is rusted. Remnants of paint on the northeast door and flaking white wash on the southwest wood door contributes to the worn appearance of the cabin. Similarly, the floor of the loft above the south room is not strong enough to support the weight of a person. The cabin, however, is in fairly good shape structurally as a result of the 1981 repairs and of the repairs currently being made in response to the April 1998 tornado that swept across The Hermitage property. The re-shingling of the roof is an example of the post-tornado effort.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Alfred's Cabin is a one-story, two room structure measuring approximately 39'2" x 19'7".[65]

2. Foundations: Supporting Alfred's Cabin are stone piers placed at each of the corners and the midpoint. There also is a series of wood pilings running from north to south beneath the cabin.[66]

3. Walls: The walls of Alfred's Cabin are made of hewn logs. The gables are covered in clapboards.[67]

4. Structural systems: The horizontal log construction of the cabin relies on the corner notching technique for its structural soundness. The weight of the logs, secured at the corners in a half-dovetail notch, holds up the walls. Alfred's Cabin is roofed by a system of small rafter pairs and collar ties, that make up the "A" frame, as well as the requisite layer of sheathing to make a common rafter roof rigid. The rafter ends rest directly on the top most log, or the wall plate, of the east and west long log walls. This log in turn is held in place by the gable plate, or the top most log lapped over the wall plate at each

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[64]For an overview of what to expect in Tennessee, see van West, ed., The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, s.v., "Houses, Vernacular Log Types," by Clifton Coxe Ellis.

[65]Measurements for the text have been rounded to the nearest inch (north wall is 19'7", east 39'2", south 19'8", and west 39.2". Measurements taken for the photogrammetry were noted by foot, inch, and one-eighth of an inch. Please see the fieldnotes for HABS No. TN-52-C.

[66]Architectural evaluations of the cabin reveal that submerged concrete blocks anchor the stone piers. See Victor Hood, "Alfred's Cabin," Report, 1991-92, Department of Preservation, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[67]For example, please see photographs: HABS No. TN-52-C-2 and TN-52-C-5.

gable end.[68]

The current roof was rebuilt completely. Moreover, the joists are all replacement features that have been left round.[69]

5. Chimneys: There is one large, central chimney in Alfred's Cabin that opens on each side to create a separate fireplace for the two rooms. It is made of stone.

6. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: In the west facade, there are two doors made of security glass secured by a metal bar and locked with a key. These glass doors are set into the existing wood frames and are about four feet wide. The surrounds are two inches thick and are without embellishment. In the east facade, access to the north pen is possible. There, the entrance is marked by a split door (half solid, half glazed with muntins dividing the section into four lights). This door measures approximately 3'0". The bottom, of wood boards, is secured by a padlock. The top, made of a glazed sash, is locked into place when the bottom section is closed. The door frame consists of boards nailed to the log walls rather than being joined together in a nicely finished surround. The frame is made of one inch wide boards.

Attached to the northern interior edge of the three door frames are the doors from an earlier era. These doors are pushed out of the visitor's sight lines. They are made of wood and have metal strap hinges and modern (white) ceramic knobs.[70]

b. Windows and shutters: There is one window in Alfred's Cabin. It is in the east wall and lights the south room. The window, made of one piece of security glass like the doors, measures three feet across including the frame.[71] The security glass is a recent addition to the window opening in Alfred's Cabin, and probably was installed when the glass was installed in the doorways.

7. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The gable roof covering Alfred's Cabin is essentially an A-frame made of common or small rafters, with collar ties coupling every other rafter pair. The sheathing is covered by overlapping oak shingles, arranged so that the east side of the roof overlaps the west. This protects the peak from water.[72]

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[68]For illustrations of the notching, please see photographs: HABS No. TN-52-C-6 and TN-52-C-7.

[69]Personal Communication, Mark S. Schara, September 1999.

[70]Please see photographs: HABS No. TN-52-C-16, TN-52-C-18, and TN-52-C-21.

[71]Please see the drawings (HABS No. TN-52-C, sheets 1 & 2) as well as photographs: HABS No. TN-52-C-8 and TN-52-C-17.

[72]During our field visit in April 1999, The Hermitage was in the process of re-shingling the east side of the roof. Repairs to Alfred's Cabin were necessary because of damage sustained from the April 1998 tornado. The previous cover was authorized by the Ladies' Hermitage Association in 1987. See Minutes, July 1987, Ladies' Hermitage Association, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee. For illustrations of the roof, please see the following photographs: HABS No. TN-52-C-9

b. Cornice, eaves: On the gable ends, the view beneath the eave reveals the construction of the cornice for Alfred's Cabin. Several wood boards were nailed to the vertical log face. To the east, the fascia followed suit. On the north gable, the fascia is approximately three and one half inches wide, whereas on the south, one thin board about an inch and a half in thickness covers the joint of the rooftop to gable. The thinness of the fascia board makes this detail more of a suggestion than one that can fulfill its architectural function. Beneath the cornice, the ends of the ceiling joists poke through the exterior wall plane. The north room's joists are large, slightly oval in shape, much like telephone or railroad piles. The south room's joists of varying sizes.[73]

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Alfred's Cabin is a two-room structure heated by a central chimney. The cabin's interior arrangement commonly is called a "saddlebag" plan. The rooms are square, measuring approximately 19' x 19'. There is loft space above each room. There is no access between the north and south rooms, nor is there a way to get from one side to the other in the corresponding lofts. In each room is a stone fireplace that draws from the central chimney. The fireplace protrudes two feet into each room and is seven feet wide. The hearths, made of bricks, are two feet deep.[74]

2. Stairways: There is no stair or ladder in the north room to the loft. In the south room, however, is a ladder stair tucked into the northeast corner. The ladder stair consists of round "logs" with the bark left on. It is not a historic feature of the cabin.[75]

3. Flooring: The floor boards are modern replacements, made of wood, and laid north to south. A typical example is six inches wide.[76]

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The log walls have been white washed.

5. Openings

a. Doorways and doors: There are no interior doors in Alfred's Cabin.

b. Windows: There is no interior window treatment; the surround for the cabin's window is the same as described for the exterior.

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and TN-52-C-10.

[73]Please see photographs: HABS No. TN-52-C-2, TN-52-C-3, and TN-52-C-8.

[74]For example, please see photographs: HABS No. TN-52-C-12, TN-52-C-13, and TN-52-C-14.

[75]Please see photographs: HABS No. TN-52-C-18 and TN-52-C-20.

[76]The Ladies' Hermitage Association replaced the floor in 1981. Also at this time, the Ladies' Hermitage Association had the cabin raised eight inches, re-graded the pathways for better drainage, removed the interior stone facing, white washed and re-chinked the walls. See Minutes, August 1981, September 1981, October 1981, and November 1981, Ladies' Hermitage Association, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

6. Hardware: There are iron strap hinges on the interior doors, as well as miscellaneous hook and eyes and padlocks.[77]

8. Mechanical equipment: Alfred's Cabin has been wired for electricity and for the security system. There is no heating, cooling, or ventilation system.

9. Original furnishings: It is not known who lived in Alfred's Cabin before 1889 or what furniture they may have had. After 1889, Alfred lived in the cabin. In 1895, the Ladies' Hermitage Association bought a mirror from Alfred. After he died, the LHA purchased furniture from his estate such as a bed and pie safe that formerly belonged to the Jackson family. These are displayed in The Hermitage Mansion today.[78]

D. Site

Alfred's Cabin is the only extant structure standing behind The Hermitage Mansion that is associated with slaves on The Hermitage property. (Although the First Hermitage served as a slave quarter after the Jacksons moved out, it was not built for slaves initially and so has other associations). The space behind The Hermitage Mansion, known as the yard, was a separate sphere from that of the main house. The yard north of The Hermitage Mansion and its kitchen included several buildings, such as an ice house, a "yard cabin," the Triplex, the smokehouse, and Alfred's Cabin.[79] The yard was a communal space where some of the plantation slaves worked. There, the tasks carried out by slaves made the yard one of the busiest places on the plantation. Although dependent on the activities going on in the yard, often a fence or barrier visually and physically drew a line between the plantation mansion and its ancillary structures. At The Hermitage, the fence line separating The Hermitage Mansion from the yard ran east to west, heading past the northern edge of the garden westward past the south wall of the Triplex. Separating the yard from the fields and other areas of the plantation, a paling fence ran east to west near the north facade of Alfred's Cabin. The fence around Alfred's Cabin connected to this northern boundary of the yard about thirty feet east of the cabin.[80]

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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[77]Please see photograph: HABS No. TN-52-C-21.

[78]Personal Communication, Clare Adams, July 1999; Personal Communication, Constance Bradley, May 1999; Ladies' Hermitage Association Photograph (P0130.2), ca. 1901, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; Minutes, December 1895, Ladies' Hermitage Association, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee; Minutes, June 1902, Ladies' Hermitage Association, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[79]Larry McKee, Brian Thomas, and Jennifer Bartlett, "Summary Report on the 1993 Hermitage Mansion Yard Excavation," Report, October 1994, Department of Archaeology, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

[80]Regarding the paling fences, see McKee, "Summary Report on the 1994 excavation around 'Alfred's Cabin' at The Hermitage," p. 17-28. For an illustration of the yard, please see Ladies' Hermitage Association Photograph (P0485), ca. 1885, Department of Collections, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

B. Early Views[81]

- Ladies' Hermitage Association Photographs, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee
- Prints and Photographs Division, Madison Building, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
- Record Group 69, Works Projects Administration, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland

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McKee, Larry, Brian Thomas and Jennifer Bartlett. "Summary Report on the 1993 Hermitage Mansion Yard Excavation." Report, October 1994. Department of Archaeology, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.

Minutes, Ladies' Hermitage Association, 1889-1990, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.[82]

The Papers of Andrew Jackson, The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee. (Microfilm)

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[81]There are reportedly several photographs of The Hermitage property from a private collection that were given to a researcher (Donald Hublar) connected to the Tennessee State Museum or to the State Library. The images supposedly are to be part of a publication. I did not get to track down this lead.

[82]Please note that when asked, the staff of The Hermitage granted access to copies of the Ladies' Hermitage Association board meetings minutes; the copies provided to me stopped in 1990.

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D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated

- Metropolitan Government Archives, Nashville Public Library, Nashville, TN

"The Metropolitan Government Archives maintains over five million records, ten thousand photographs, 2500 volumes, and over 200 videocassettes. Dating from 1780-1990, these records document the history of Nashville and Davidson County from colonial times to the present."[83]

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[83]Description taken directly from the Metropolitan Archives Information page in the Nashville Public Library System website, accessed 23 July 1999.

The reference staff at the Tennessee State Library and Archives recommended that I go to the "Metro" Archives and unfortunately I did not have time to do in the budgeted time of this project and considering its emphasis on the Andrew Jackson papers. The Metropolitan Government Archives, however, is a promising collection to investigate.

- Tennessee Historical Commission, Nashville, TN

The Tennessee Historical Commission should have information regarding the Clover Bottom area. I had hoped to pursue the architectural history of Clover Bottom because Andrew Jackson's store and racetrack were located there. If receipts in the Andrew Jackson papers and people associated with building projects at the store could be identified, than perhaps some distinction could be made between what Jackson was doing at The Hermitage and at Clover Bottom.

- Tennessee Room, State Library and Archives, Nashville, TN

This room has general information on the state and these sources would provide good background to place The Hermitage in context.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of three of the log cabins on The Hermitage property was undertaken in 1999 by the Washington, D.C., office of the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), a division of the National Park Service. The NPS principals involved were E. Blaine Cliver, Division Chief, HABS/HAER, and Paul D. Dolinsky, Chief, HABS, and on behalf of the project sponsor, James Vaughan, Executive Director, The Hermitage, and Clare Adams, Director of Preservation, The Hermitage. The recordation project was initiated by Catherine C. Lavoie, Supervisory Historian, HABS, Mark S. Schara, HABS Architect, and Jillian E. Galle, Research Archaeologist, The Hermitage. The field recording was done by Project Supervisor, Mark S. Schara, HABS Architect, and Naomi Hernandez, HABS Architect, with assistance from Virginia B. Price, HABS Historian, and Jillian E. Galle, Research Archaeologist, The Hermitage. The architectural drawings were completed in Washington, D.C., by Mark S. Schara, Naomi Hernandez, and Brian Bitner, HABS Architects. The project historian was Virginia B. Price. Large format photography was produced by Jack E. Boucher, HABS Photographer.